

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Didymo

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Researchers recently found a nuisance algae in Jackson County's Tuckasegee River, prompting calls for anglers to be especially diligent when cleaning fishing equipment.

Didymo, also called rock snot, can produce algal mats along stream bottoms so thick that they alter habitats and make fishing difficult. Researchers from Tennessee Tech University collected cells of the algae in 2015 — the first time it has been documented in North Carolina.

Because didymo can spread easily, state biologists recommend anglers remove any visible mud, plants, fish, or animals before transporting equipment; eliminate water from equipment before transporting; and, clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has a webpage listing other steps anglers can take to help prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species.

This marks the third time in a little over a year that an aquatic nuisance species has been discovered in western North Carolina. Gill lice were found for the first time in North Carolina on brook trout in Macon County. Another species of gill lice, affecting rainbow trout, was found in Haywood and Watauga counties. And whirling disease, a parasite affecting trout, was confirmed for the first time in the state in rainbow trout collected in Watauga County.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.